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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 005584

SIPDIS

FROM U.S. MISSION IN ROME

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AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY FOR CHARGE D'AFFAIRES
STATE FOR AS/PRM DEWEY, PRM/P, WHA/CEN AND IO/D
USAID FOR AA/LAC, AA/DCHA WINTER, D/DCHA/FFP LANDIS, PPC/DP,
PPC/DC
USDA/FAS FOR GSM KMILLER, MCHAMBLISS AND RTILLSWORTH
GENEVA FOR RMA AND NKYLOH/USAID
BRUSSELS FOR PLERNER
USUN FOR CSERWER
NSC FOR JDWORKEN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [AORC](#) [PREF](#) [EAGR](#) [AORC](#) [PREF](#) [EU](#) [WFP](#) [UN](#) [EU](#) [EAID](#) [WFP](#) [UN](#)
SUBJECT: WFP EXECUTIVE BOARD APPROVAL OF PROTRACTED RELIEF
AND RECOVERY OPERATION (PRRO) FOR CENTRAL AMERICA - USD
56.62 MILLION

REF: (A) ROME 5308

SUMMARY

[¶](#)1. AT ITS THIRD REGULAR SESSION (OCTOBER 21-25), THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM EXECUTIVE BOARD APPROVED A PROTRACTED RELIEF AND RECOVERY OPERATION (PRRO) FOR CENTRAL AMERICA - THREE YEARS (MARCH 2003-FEBRUARY 2006), VALUED AT USD 56.62 MILLION, TO ASSIST 690,000 BENEFICIARIES/ANNUM. SEVERE CORN CROP LOSSES IN THE FIRST PLANTING CYCLE OF THIS YEAR WILL LIKELY FURTHER AGGRAVATE AN ALREADY DIFFICULT SITUATION IN A CHRONICALLY FOOD INSECURE REGION. USMISSION PLANS TO WORK WITH WFP HEADQUARTERS IN ITS EFFORTS TO SECURE GOVERNMENT OF UNCLASSIFIED

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MEXICO FUNDING SUPPORT FOR THIS PRRO. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND

[¶](#)2. THE WORSENING ECONOMIC SITUATION, PRECIPITATED BY A REPORTED 70 PERCENT DROP IN COFFEE PRICES AFFECTING MILLIONS OF COFFEE GROWERS AND THEIR FAMILIES, COUPLED WITH RECURRING NATURAL DISASTERS HAVE CONTINUED TO TRIGGER EXTREME POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY AMONG RURAL AND URBAN POPULATIONS IN THE FOUR COUNTRIES (GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, EL SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA). IN 2000, DROUGHTS, EARTHQUAKES, FLOODS AND TROPICAL STORMS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED FOOD PRODUCTION AND ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE, AFFECTING SOME 2.4 MILLION PEOPLE. PEOPLE ARE STILL FEELING THE EFFECTS OF THESE SHOCKS IN 2002, WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY CONFRONTING A NEW ROUND OF DROUGHT AND A CONTINUING CRISIS IN THE COFFEE SECTOR. IN ADDITION, PREDICTIONS ARE THAT EL NINO WILL AGAIN CAUSE CLIMATIC DISTURBANCES IN 2003.

[¶](#)3. LOCALIZED NUTRITIONAL SURVEYS CONFIRM THAT 5 YEARS OF DROUGHT AND ECONOMIC CRISIS IS CAUSING DETERIORATION IN MALNUTRITION AMONG CHILDREN AGED UNDER FIVE IN CENTRAL AMERICA. ACCORDING TO THE UN'S FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION (FAO), THERE ARE OVER 7.1 MILLION UNDERNOURISHED CENTRAL AMERICANS (1998/2000) SHOWING AN INCREASE OF 3 PERCENT SINCE 1990/1992. IN GUATEMALA, HUNGER INCREASED FROM 14 PERCENT TO 25 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION, WITH 69 PERCENT OF CHILDREN CHRONICALLY MALNOURISHED. IN NICARAGUA, 33 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION IS AFFECTED BY FOOD UNCLASSIFIED

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SHORTAGES AND MALNUTRITION. IN ONE DEPARTMENT ALONE, MATAGALPA, EMERGENCY FOOD HAD TO BE PROVIDED TO 7,500 CHILDREN SUFFERING FROM EXTREME HUNGER.

WFP EXECUTIVE BOARD APPROVAL OF CENTRAL AMERICA PRRO

[¶](#)4. THE BOARD APPROVED THIS PRRO FOR THREE YEARS (MARCH 2003-FEBRUARY 2006), VALUED AT USD 56.62 MILLION, TO ASSIST 690,000 BENEFICIARIES/ANNUM. THE BOARD AGREED THAT THIS PROGRAMMING INSTRUMENT WILL PERMIT WFP TO RESPOND EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO SHOCKS, IN ORDER TO PREVENT ACUTE MALNUTRITION AMONG FOOD-INSECURE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES EXPOSED TO RECURRING CALAMITIES AND ASSIST IN REBUILDING AND BUFFERING LIVELIHOODS ERODED BY EXPOSURE TO DISASTERS.

US DELEGATION INTERVENTION

15. THE US DELEGATION HIGHLIGHTED THE FOLLOWING:

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ACTION PRM-00

INFO LOG-00 AID-00 AMAD-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 CTME-00 WHA-00
SRPP-00 EB-00 EUR-00 E-00 UTED-00 TEDE-00 INR-00
IO-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OES-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 SSO-00
STR-00 TEST-00 TRSE-00 USIE-00 SAS-00 /003W
-----0A7CFC 181530Z /38

P 181213Z NOV 02
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6949
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY BERN
USDA FAS WASHDC 2428
USEU BRUSSELS 2959
USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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-WHEN PRESIDENT BUSH SPOKE DURING THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS
WITH THE PRESIDENTS OF CENTRAL AMERICA IN QUEBEC CITY ON
APRIL 20, 2001, HE STRESSED THE "NEED FOR US TO CONTINUE TO
THINK ABOUT HOW BEST TO HAVE IN PLACE MEASURES THAT WILL
HELP IN THE CASE OF FUTURE NATURAL DISASTERS;"

-USDEL NOTED THAT THE NEW PRRO PROVIDES WFP THE PROGRAMMATIC
FLEXIBILITY TO RESPOND TO THE CHANGING DYNAMICS IN EACH OF
THE FOUR CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES COVERED AND THE
DIFFERING CHALLENGES THAT EACH PRESENTS;

-WFP WAS PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE IN THE AFTERMATH OF
HURRICANE MITCH IN: A) ALMOST IMMEDIATELY STRENGTHENING
STAFF LEVELS BY TRANSFERRING ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL STAFF
TO THE REGION AS NEEDED; AND B) FORTIFYING TEAMS WITH
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EXPERTS IN LOGISTICS AND COMMUNICATIONS, VULNERABILITY
ANALYSIS AND MAPPING SPECIALISTS, AND UN VOLUNTEERS, ETC.

-USDEL URGED CLOSE COORDINATION ON NEEDS ASSESSMENTS AND
IMPLEMENTATION PLANS WITH THE RESPECTIVE USAID MISSIONS AND
USDA AGRICULTURAL ATTACHES IN THE REGION.

COMMENT

16. USMISSION SEES A CONTINUING IMPORTANT ROLE FOR WFP AND
ITS UN SISTER AGENCIES IN RESPONDING TO THE FOOD CRISIS IN
CENTRAL AMERICA. SEVERE CORN CROP LOSSES IN THE FIRST
PLANTING CYCLE OF THIS YEAR WILL LIKELY FURTHER AGGRAVATE AN
ALREADY DIFFICULT SITUATION IN A CHRONICALLY FOOD INSECURE
REGION. FINALLY, USMISSION PLANS TO WORK WITH WFP
HEADQUARTERS IN ITS EFFORTS TO SECURE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO

FUNDING SUPPORT FOR THIS PRRO. MEXICO IS PRESENTLY NOT A
DONOR TO WFP. HALL

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